

**INDO-RUSSIAN MILITARY AND
NUCLEAR COOPERATION:
IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S.
SECURITY INTERESTS**

Jerome M. Conley

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Comments pertaining to this paper are invited; please forward to:

Director, USAF Institute for National Security Studies

HQ USAFA/DFES

2354 Fairchild Drive, Suite 5L27

USAF Academy, CO 80840

phone: 719-333-2717

fax: 719-333-2716

email: james.smith@usafa.af.mil

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FOREWORD

We are pleased to publish this thirtieth volume in the *Occasional Paper* series of the US Air Force Institute for National Security Studies (INSS). This paper is derived from United States Marine Corps Major (select) Jerome M. Conley's Naval Postgraduate School thesis. It presents a detailed analysis of the Indian rationale behind their nuclear tests of 1998. As Major Conley concludes, "While some observers cite the inability of the United States to prevent India's overt testing in May 1998 as a failure in American efforts, the analysis in this thesis of India's strategic culture suggests that India's decision to test was driven primarily by domestic politics, and was therefore beyond the reach of American nonproliferation efforts." He then goes on to develop specific policy recommendations for the United States to engage the new nuclear powers of South Asia to shape their future nuclear development, to facilitate transparency and confidence-building measures, to educate the regions powers on the full costs of their recent decisions, and to supplant Russian influence. In short, he calls for active U.S. engagement and shaping of the nuclear future of the region.

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JAMES M. SMITH
Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper analyzes the history of Indo-Russian military and nuclear cooperation. The “special” Moscow-New Delhi relationship during the Cold War, it concludes, was based upon Indian needs, American ambivalence, and Soviet opportunism. In the post-Cold War era this relationship has persisted due to continued American ambivalence, short-term Indian military needs, and Russian economic needs. This bond, therefore, may be fractured by an eventual improvement in Indian military self-reliance or a deepening in Indo-American military cooperation. India’s strategic culture, rooted in Indian history, geography and political culture, has created an Indian strategic mindset impervious to American nonproliferation efforts. The paper finds, moreover, that there are no short-term “silver bullets” to cure the current Indo-American rift, which flows from causes in addition to India’s nuclear weapons tests in 1998. While short-term measures can be taken to improve the bilateral relationship, the historical rift that has emerged between the two states cannot be easily mended. The United States, therefore, must strive to ensure that Indian nuclear expansion is conducted in a controlled, safe and limited manner.

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